

Amendments to the claims

Please cancel claims 12, 33, 38, and 44 and amend claims 9-11, 17, 28-30 , and 32 as indicated.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. *(Previously presented)* A method of fermenting milk comprising adding a cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to milk and keeping the milk under conditions where the bacterial culture is able to acidify the milk, wherein said auxotrophic bacterial strain is non-proliferating in the milk.

Claims 2–8 *(Cancelled)*.

9. *(Currently amended)* The [[A]] method according to claim 1 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a strain of a species selected from the group consisting of *Lactococcus* spp., *Lactobacillus* spp., *Leuconostoc* spp., *Pediococcus* spp., *Streptococcus* spp., *Propionibacterium* spp., *Bifidobacterium* spp., *Staphylococcus* spp., *Micrococcus* spp., *Bacillus* spp., *Enterobacteriaceae* spp. *Actinomycetes* spp., *Corynebacterium* spp. and *Brevibacterium* spp.

10. *(Currently amended)* The [[A]] method according to claim 9 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a purine or thymidine auxotrophic strain of *Lactococcus lactis*.

11. *(Currently amended)* The [[A]] method according to claim 1 wherein the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is added to the milk at a concentration between 10^5 and 10^9 CFU/ml or g of the milk.

Claims 12–16 *(Cancelled)*.

17. *(Currently amended)* The [[A]] method according to claim 1 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a strain that increases the size of its cells without mitosis when cultured in milk.

Claims 18–23 (*Cancelled*).

24. (*Previously presented*) The method of claim 1 wherein the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain does not include any of the strains DN101, DN102, DN103, DN104 and DN105.

Claims 25–27 (*Cancelled*).

28. (*Currently amended*) The [[A]] method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus lactis* strain DN105 deposited under the accession number DSM 12289.

29. (*Currently amended*) The [[A]] method according to claim 1 wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus lactis* strain MBP71 deposited under the accession number DSM 12891.

30. (*Currently amended*) The [[A]] method for keeping the capability of a bacterial strain to ferment milk even in the presence of a bacteriophage, the method comprising:

adding a cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to milk, and keeping the milk under conditions where the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is able to ferment the milk, wherein said auxotrophic bacterial strain is non-proliferating in the milk.

31. (*Previously presented*) A method of preparing a dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring comprising, adding a cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to a dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material, and maintaining the thus-obtained inoculated dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material under such conditions that the bacterial strain of the bacterial culture is metabolically active and is able to acidify or ferment the dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material, wherein said auxotrophic bacterial strain is non-proliferating in the dairy flavouring and/or a product for cheese flavouring starting material.

32. (*Currently amended*) The [[A]] method according to claim 9 wherein the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is a strain of *E. coli*.

33. *(Cancelled)*

34. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, further comprising propagating the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain in a medium in which the strain is capable of replicating prior to adding the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to milk.

35. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, wherein the milk further comprises a bacteriophage.

36. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1, whereby the milk is acidified to a pH less than or equal to 5.0.

37. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1 which produces a dairy flavour, a product for cheese flavouring, a food product, or a feed product.

38. *(Cancelled)*

39. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, further comprising propagating the purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain in a medium in which the strain is capable of replicating prior to adding the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain to the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material.

40. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, wherein the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material further comprises a bacteriophage.

41. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, whereby the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material is acidified to a pH less than or equal to 5.0.

42. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 31, wherein the cultured purine or thymidine auxotrophic bacterial strain is added to the dairy flavouring and/or product

for cheese flavouring starting material at a concentration between 10^5 and 10^9 CFU/ml or g of the dairy flavouring and/or product for cheese flavouring starting material.

43. *(Previously presented)* The method of claim 1 which results in preparation of a product selected from the group consisting of a dairy flavour, a product for cheese flavouring, a food product, and a feed product.

44. *(Cancelled)*